

REMARKS

Formal Matters

With this Amendment, Applicant adds claims 27-29. Therefore, claims 1-12, 14, and 18-29 are all the claims pending in the present Application.

By this amendment, Applicant editorially amends claims 1-3, 6, 10, 11, 18, 19, 21-23, 25, and 26. The amendments to claims 6, 10, 11, and 21 are made for reasons of clarity and precision of language, and do not narrow the literal scope of the claims and thus do not implicate an estoppel in the application of the doctrine of equivalents. The amendments are not made for reasons of patentability.

Applicant respectfully requests that dependent withdrawn claims should be revived upon allowance of the claims from which they depend.

Further to Applicant's election of Species A reading on Figure 3, including claims 1-3, 6, 10, 11, and 18-26, claims 4, 5, 7-9, 12, and 14 are withdrawn from consideration. The Examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge such election in the next PTO communication.

Applicant notes that an Information Disclosure Statement was filed on March 14, 2008. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner consider the references listed therein and return a duly signed and initialed copy of PTO form with the next Office communication.

New claims 27-29 are fully supported by the originally-filed specification. Entry of these claims is respectfully requested.

With this Amendment, Applicants amend paragraphs [0006] and [0008] to correct minor informalities. Entry of these amendments is respectfully requested.

Objection to Drawings

The drawings are objected to by the Examiner for not showing "the blocking unit" that is recited in claims 6 and 10. Applicant respectfully submits that AND circuits 91, 92 in Figures

13, 22, and 37 depict exemplary embodiments of the “blocking unit” recited in the claims. As disclosed in the specification, “AND circuits 91, 92 **function as blocking means for blocking the clock signal generated by clock generator circuit 10 from being supplied to block circuits 31, 32** for the period of time during which voltage change detector circuit 90 determines that the voltage is changing.” *See* Specification pg. 23 ¶ [0068] (emphasis added). In light of this, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the objection to the drawings.

Claim Objections

Claim 21 has been objected to by the Examiner because the recitation of “if” is allegedly not a positive recitation. The Examiner has recommended a change to --when--. Applicant respectfully submits the following in traversal.

It is well known that an “Applicant may use functional language, alternative expressions, negative limitations, or any style of expression or format of claim which makes clear the boundaries of the subject matter for which protection is sought.” *See* M.P.E.P. 2173.01. “Breadth of a claim is not to be equated with indefiniteness.” *In re Miller*, 441 F.2d 689, 169 USPQ 597 (CCPA 1971), *cited in* M.P.E.P. 2173.04. Applicant submits that the plain meaning of claim 21 is clear and respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the objection.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner has rejected claims 6, 10, and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for allegedly failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner contends that “a blocking unit that blocks a clock signal is confusing and unclear” and that “Figure 22 of the

present application shows that the clock signal is directly supplied to the block circuits (31, 32).” See Office Action pg. 3 (emphasis in original). Based on the alleged technical deficiency of claim 6, the Examiner considers claims 20 and 21 to be indefinite.

Applicant respectfully submits that in Figure 22, the AND circuits 91, 92 are located between the CLK generator circuit 10 and the block circuits 31, 32. As submitted above with respect to the objection to the drawings, the AND circuits 91, 92 are exemplary embodiments of the “blocking unit” that is recited in the claims. Applicant respectfully submits that “a blocking unit that prevents the clock signal from being supplied to the at least one block,” as recited in claims 6, 10, and 11, is not confusing and unclear. Applicants further respectfully submit that the claims are not indefinite, and request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the objection.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3, 6, 10, 11, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0190283 to Seno et al. (hereinafter “Seno”). Applicant respectfully submits the following in traversal.

Regarding claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Seno does not disclose, *inter alia*, “at least one variable delay circuit which provides a delay in the clock signals received by the at least one block ... wherein the delay changes in accordance with a change in the supply voltage provided to the at least one block.” Instead, Seno discloses changing the delay in accordance with the delay of the critical path. See Seno ¶ [0041]. Seno discloses that the delay value changes “to give a desired delay value becoming a delay value **equal to that of the critical path.**” See Seno ¶ [0032]. Elsewhere Seno discloses that “[p]referably, the, [sic] delay value of the monitor circuit is constant **even if ... the power supply voltage changes.**” See Seno ¶

[0053] (emphasis added). To the extent that Seno discloses that “[t]he monitor circuit 23 changes largely in delay time depending on the power supply voltage V_{DD} ,” the monitor circuit 23 of Seno is a separate unit that does not contain FF1-FF3, which the Examiner alleges correspond with the blocks of claim 1, or BF2-1 and BF-2, which the Examiner alleges correspond with the variable delay circuits of claim 1. *See* Seno ¶ [0204]; Seno FIG. 7. For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that Seno does not disclose these unique features of claim 1, and consequently cannot anticipate claim 1.

Regarding claim 2, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 2, which is dependent from independent claim 1, is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency from claim 1. Applicant also respectfully disagrees with the statement by the Examiner that “when the power supply decreases, the circuit conducts less thus the delay increases.” *See* Office Action pg. 3.

Regarding claim 3, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 3 is patentable at least for the same or similar reasons as those submitted for claim 1. Applicant also respectfully submits that claim 3 is patentable at least because Seno does not disclose, *inter alia*, “a voltage level detector circuit which detects a voltage level of the supply voltage.” The Examiner contends that Seno discloses a voltage detector circuit in Figure 17. On the contrary, Figure 17 discloses “a view of an example of the configuration of the delay reference element.” *See* Seno ¶ [0108]. Figure 17 of Seno depicts the oscillatable delay reference element 332, which is a part of the monitor circuit 33. *See* Seno ¶ [0286]. The monitor circuit of Seno is not a “voltage level detector circuit” but rather is involved in detecting the **delay of the critical path**, “receiving and propagating the input signal from the input signal generation circuit, and outputting a delayed signal [to] be delayed exactly by a time equivalent to delay of the critical path.” *See* Seno ¶

[0041]. In other words, Seno does not disclose a voltage level detector as recited in claim 3, and for at least these reasons Seno cannot anticipate claim 3.

Regarding claim 6, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 6, which is dependent from independent claim 1, is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency from claim 1. Further regarding claim 6, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 6 is patentable at least for the same or similar reasons as those submitted for claim 3.

Furthermore regarding claim 6, Applicant respectfully submits that Seno does not disclose, *inter alia*, “a blocking unit that prevents the clock signal from being supplied to the at least one block during a period in which the voltage change detector circuit detects a change in the supply voltage.” The Examiner has not indicated how Seno discloses these unique features of claim 6, and thus Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has not made a *prima facie* case that Seno anticipates claim 6.

Regarding claims 10 and 11, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 10 and 11, which are ultimately dependent from claims 1 and 3, respectively, are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency from claims 1 and 3. Applicant also respectfully submits that claims 10 and 11 are patentable at least because of the same or similar reasons as those submitted for claim 6.

Further regarding claims 10 and 11, Applicant respectfully submits that Seno does not disclose, *inter alia*, “a voltage change detector circuit which detects a change in the supply voltage.” The Examiner has not indicated how Seno discloses these unique features of claims 10 and 11, and thus Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has not made a *prima facie* case that Seno anticipates claims 10 and 11.

Regarding claim 18, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 18, which is dependent from independent claim 1, is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency from claim 1.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 19 is rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Seno in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,262,616 to Srinivasan et al. (hereinafter “Srinivasan”).

Applicant respectfully submits that Srinivasan fails to remedy the above-discussed deficiencies of Seno. Thus, Applicant submits that claim 19, which is dependent from independent claim 1, is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency from claim 1.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has indicated that claims 20-26 contain allowable subject matter but are objected to for being dependent from a rejected base claim. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to hold this objection in abeyance at least until Applicant’s arguments with respect to the base claims have been fully considered.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

This Application is being filed via the USPTO Electronic Filing System (EFS).

Applicants herewith petition the Director of the USPTO to extend the time for reply to the above-identified Office Action for an appropriate length of time if necessary. Any fee due under 37 U.S.C. § 1.17(a) is being paid via the USPTO Electronic Filing System (EFS). The USPTO is also directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: June 17, 2008